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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 520
By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to honor Ms. Melba Moore for her outstanding accomplishments and dedication to public service.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those persons who, through their natural talents and commitment to excellence, have distinguished themselves in their communities and throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Melba Moore is one such exemplary individual who has dedicated her life as an award-winning singer, actress, and philanthropist to helping others less fortunate; and

WHEREAS, this remarkable woman's efforts have extended to the Volunteer State as she will be appearing in Memphis on April 29, 2000, at the 3rd Annual Journey Through Life Event of the Families of Incarcerated Individuals held at LeMoyne Owen College; and

WHEREAS, the Families of Incarcerated Individuals seeks to assist those less fortunate families with financial aid, day-care, and emotional support; and

WHEREAS, this event is just one of many worthy causes Ms. Moore is involved in; she has established the Melba Moore Foundation for Children to raise and channel funds to

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selected organizations to increase their ability to extend, expand, and create innovative programs and services for infants and children who are in immediate crisis, or whose well-being is threatened or in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, inspired by Marian Wright Edelman, who continually strives to establish legislation to support the needs of children, Ms. Moore founded the Melba Moore Foundation in 1989; and

WHEREAS, through her enduring talents, Melba has established her place in the hearts and minds of audiences for the past 30 years; and

WHEREAS, the impact of this outstanding lady began in her childhood; Melba Moore was born in New York City to musicians, Ted and Bonnie Hill, and her stepfather, Clem Moorman who, as a popular pianist and singer, served as the inspiration to her career; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Moore was singing at the age of 4; she began studying the piano and voice at a high school for the performing arts in Newark, New Jersey; she then received a bachelor's degree in music education from Montclair State Teacher's College; and

WHEREAS, she shared her musical abilities as a teacher for a time, before deciding to pursue her dreams of being a performer; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-60s Melba Moore worked with the group, Voices, Inc., and as a solo artist and background vocalist for several recording studios; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, she auditioned for a role in the Broadway hit "Hair"; she played a variety of roles during the show's debut, and eventually was chosen for the lead role; and

WHEREAS, her performance was hailed as groundbreaking by critics, it was the first time in the history of Broadway that a black actress had replaced a white actress; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Moore later had even greater theatrical success in the musical "Purlie" where she played Lutiebelle; her incredible abilities did not go unnoticed, as she received numerous accolades for the show, including the prestigious New York Drama Critics Award, the Drama Desk Award, and the Tony Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical; and

WHEREAS, she toured for two years with the musical "Mamma, I'm Sorry," and returned to the Broadway stage in 1996 for "Les Miserables" as the first African American anywhere in the world to play the role of Fantine; and

WHEREAS, during her estimable career, this great performer has appeared on television as a featured player in many dramatic series, network variety shows and films; as a vocalist, she has recorded several albums that established her as a powerhouse entertainer; and

WHEREAS, her extraordinary vocal range and tremendous breath control made her rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" her biggest recording hit to date; and

WHEREAS, Melba Moore radiates a new attitude and spiritual consciousness that reaches a higher altitude, she recently completed her autobiography entitled *Sentenced to Sing*, and is preparing a one-woman Broadway show by the same name; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Moore's outstanding artistic accomplishments and dedication to improving the lives of this country's most precious resource, our children, are clearly deserving of the respect, admiration, and commendation of this legislative body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Ms. Melba Moore, reflecting on her impeccable career as a singer, actress, and performer, and applaud her estimable philanthropic efforts to aid the nation's youth through the Melba Moore Foundation. We extend to her our wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.